

15345
A 3504 2/5
1-8
FREE and SOBER
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
TRUTH 4
OF
CERTAIN PARAGRAPHS

Contained in the
ASSEMBLY'S Shorter Catechism.

Occasioned by
A late *Revisal* of it, by an Anonymous
AUTHOR, to render it fitter for Ge-
neral Use.

By DAVID REES. K

LUKE v. 39. *No Man also having drunk old
Wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith
the old is better.*

L O N D O N :
Printed for AARON WARD, at the *King's Arms* in Little
Britain; RICHARD FORD, at the *Angel*, and JOHN GRAY,
at the *Cross Keys*, both in the Poultry. M.DCC.XXXVI.
[Price Six Pence.]

ENOCH AND SON'S A

INTO THE
 TRUTH
 OF

CERTAIN PARAGRAPHS

Contained in the

Assembly of



A late Revised of it by an Anonymous
 Author, to render it fair for Ge-
 neral Use.

BY DAVID REES.

LONDON: No Man who has seen this
 Work, has not been struck with the
 force of the reasoning, and the
 beauty of the style.

LONDON:
 Printed for Aaron Ward, at the King's Arms in
 St. Martin's Lane, at the Angel, and John Gray,
 at the Cross Keys, both in the Strand. MDCCLXXXVI.
 (Price Six Pence)



THE

Introduction.

IT may reasonably be demanded, why these few Papers come out so late, after the *Revisal* of the *Shorter CATECHISM* had appeared to the World for many Months, and pass'd under the Remarks of a very able Hand? The Reader may please to receive the following Account.

When the *Revisal* of the *Assembly's Shorter Catechism* was first published,

iv INTRODUCTION.

lished, I promised my self something very valuable, by way of farther Improvement upon that little excellent Abridgment, as there had been divers laudable Attempts of that Kind before ; but was surprizingly disappointed, when I saw the very Foundations torn up by the Roots, and Materials of a very strange and dangerous Mixture placed in their Room.

Having indulged a calm Reflection of Mind, that I had earnestly recommended and inculcated to others, for a Term of Years, most of the principal Doctrines which are fallen under this *Author's* Displeasure, it rais'd in me a just Resolution to re-examine them ; and to try whether or no
my

INTRODUCTION.

V

my self had been all this while mistaken, as well as unwarily had misled others: And, upon a most impartial and serious Review, I still apprehend the Sentiments of the *Westminster Assembly* to be the most consonant to the *Holy Scriptures*, to Experience, and the strictest Observations I could make on the divine Providence.

Yet it was but prudent for me to wait, for a considerable Time, to hear what some worthy Persons, in *London*, would say upon this, so important an Occasion. Nor was my Expectation frustrated: For, in a short Time after I had drawn up the following Pages, there came out excellent *Remarks* upon the *Revival*; and for which

vi INTRODUCTION.

I take this Opportunity to return my humble Thanks to the ingenious and worthy Author, whoever he be. For this Reason, I then laid aside the Thoughts of Publishing my own Sentiments, as judging they would be needless.

But, it being urged to me afterwards, by some intimate Friends, that the Method I had taken, was quite different from his; mine being rather a modest Defence of some chief Points struck at, in the *Revisal*, than Remarks upon the whole, I consented to a Publication; as being willing to hope that a few plain Things, though offer'd by a Person of Obscurity, and far meaner Furniture, might not be altogether unserviceable.

And

INTRODUCTION. vii

And I take the greater Encouragement, in that I cannot forbear concluding that the *Reviser* is wrong in his Calculation, by reckoning too fast, when he would engross the Majority of the *Ministers of this Day*, as in *his* Way of Thinking.

However, I remain firmly persuaded, that if the Gentlemen of superior Abilities, in the *City* and *Country*, who have been trained up in the Principles of this *Catechism*, and still retain a favourable Aspect towards it, would heartily bend their excellent Talents to the Service and Defence of it, they might either stem or divert the Torrent; or, at least, check the Violence and Rapidity
of

viii INTRODUCTION.

of the Progress of the *New Scheme*.
Not that I think there is any Thing
properly *new* in it; for 'tis only
a crude Collection of Heathenish
Notions, fram'd into a System of
stupid and *lifeless* Morality: And
all this injuriously father'd on *di-
vine Revelation*; but comes very
far short of the Spirit, and vital
Power of *true Christianity*.





A

FREE and SOBER
ENQUIRY, &c.



LF the Reverend and Learned *Reviser* had formed a *new* and *distinct* CATECHISM, consisting purely of his *own Principles*, and those of the *Majority of the Ministers of this Age*, whom he claims as on his Side, it would in my Opinion have denoted a much nobler Resolution, and not less Fairness and Candour.

But to attempt to introduce Notions contrary to those of the *Westminster Assembly*, under the Covert of their *own Catechism*, by quashing some entire Paragraphs, by transposing some particular Phrases, or by adding other imperfect Sentences, seems to me to be a sort of Acting in Disguise; and as if Things were not ripe enough, as yet, for the *Author* to declare his Sentiments so roundly as he could wish.

For such a new *Model*, fix'd upon its own proper *Basis*, would without doubt have been of a Piece, and have given a better Opportunity of judging between the Author's Scheme and that of the Assembly, by comparing the one with the other, and bringing of both to the Standard of the Scripture. For 'tis not the *Majority of Ministers* can make a Scheme *true*, or *false*; but the Conformity of the Principles, conveyed therein, to the Truths contained in the revealed Will of God.

I shall therefore take the Liberty, briefly to examine, whether several of the Expunctions, Alterations and Emendations, of the Reverend Author, are for the *better*, or for the *worse*.

1. I readily agree with this worthy Gentleman, that the excellent *Compilers* of the *Assembly's Catechism* ^a never pretended to *Infallibility*; nor do I know of any, who are so weak as to think they were inspired, or to suppose that we are bound to believe as they did, any farther than we can perceive that their Sentiments are supported by substantial Proofs.

2. I observe the Author's profess'd Design in Revising the *Assembly's Catechism* to be, by a few Alterations, to have it framed in such a Manner, as that several Controversies, which don't concern Things absolutely necessary to Salvation, may be past by, &c.

Now, though I shall not pretend to determine what Things in particular may be absolutely necessary to Salvation; yet this learned Gentleman does not seem to allow the Holy

^a Preface, p. 3, 4.

Scriptures themselves to be absolutely necessary in this Respect: For, in his Answer to the second Question of the Catechism, instead of saying, *The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only Rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him*; he says, 'Tis not only a sufficient, but the principal Rule.

I would not willingly mistake his Meaning, but I think he must intend that there is another less principal, and yet sufficient Rule, to direct us how we may both glorify God and enjoy him. For the Gentleman is too wary to express himself after this Manner; and he needed not to have alter'd and qualified the Answer of the Assembly, if he had not a secondary Rule in View and in Reserve, which he judg'd sufficient to direct us to enjoy God for ever. Nor has he left me at any loss to conclude that 'tis the Light of Nature, which he meant: And if the *Light of Nature* be sufficient to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God for ever, it will not only draw a Veil upon *Revelation*, but infinitely reduce the intrinsic Value of it, and bring it almost, if not altogether, upon a *Par* with it self; only with this *Salvo*, that we pay this Compliment, that the *latter* is the *principal Rule*, but the *other* it seems is *sufficient*.

Here I beg Leave to observe, that 'tis common, in our Day, for the Gentlemen in the *New Scheme*, the Advocates of *Natural Religion*, first to borrow all the Aids of *Revelation*, and to furnish themselves with its Advantages and Discoveries, and then to set up for great Admirers of the *Light of Nature*; and to tell us, they could have found out the Contents of the Bible, especially the *Way to Heaven*, by the Power

of Reason. This is acting not only a disingenuous, but a very injurious Part towards *Revelation*, to batter it down with its own Weapons; and how lawful soever it may be to turn their Artillery against the Enemy in War, yet 'tis both unfair and impious, to raise the Value of the *Light of Nature* at the Expence of *Revelation*. We have Men that will boast they can find their Way from *London* to *St. Albans*, in a dark Night:—Granted: But have they not been guided thither before, by the glorious *Luminary* that rules the Day? and is it so mighty a Feat to brag of afterwards, that they can beat out their Road thither in the Dark? The Application is very easy.

The only Way to judge impartially, in my humble Apprehension, would be this: To strip Naural Light of all the Ornaments, Embellishments, and Aids received from *Revelation*; take down this haughty *Dame*, *Reason*, from her usurped Throne, especially from that extravagant Height to which she is exalted of late; let her stand upon her own Legs, and act in her own single Strength, without the least Prop from *Revelation* to lean upon; and then see what an aukward Figure she will make, in groping about in the Dark to find the Way of Salvation; or, in the Assembly's Terms, *how to glorify and enjoy God for ever*.

'Tis an unequal and unsafe Method of judging of the Excellency of the *Light of Nature*, from some curious Hints and refin'd Notions, that may be met with in some of the most famous of the moral Writers among the *Greeks* or *Romans*. For,

(1.) These were the Effects of exquisite Labour, and very great Study. They had spent no

no Pains, nor grudg'd any Cost to come at these Attainments. 'Tis well known how inquisitive they were, and how indefatigably they search'd, far and near, for the Remains of the *Sages* and *Worthies*, who were gone before them; and that they spent very considerable Time in their Travels, to form their Judgments, to heighten their Intellectuals, and to add to their Acquirements.

(2.) The Men of these Attainments were but very few, comparatively; and those too of an uncommon Genius, of an extraordinary Mould, whose Penetration and Capacities reach'd far beyond the Vulgar.

(3.) It may, I think, be demonstrated, that the best *Ideas*, and most exalted Thoughts of the celebrated Heathen Writers, are owing to *Revelation*: And that this came to pass by a traditional Conveyance from one Age to another, may very reasonably be accounted for, after this Manner. 'Tis allowed, that the *Romans* borrowed their politest Knowledge from the *Greeks*; the *Greeks* from the *Egyptians*, and *Phœnicians*, and *Chaldeans*; and all these from the *Hebrews*. Nor indeed is it any wonder that there should be some good and wise Men in the *East*, where there must be some remaining Influences of the divine Instructions of an *Abraham* and a *Job*. The Families and Posterity of these illustrious Personages could not fail to diffuse some of the excellent Principles they had imbib'd from their pious Parents, to their Neighbours, and adjacent Countries. 'Tis farther evident

^b But unto the Sons of the Concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave Gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his Son (while he yet lived) Eastward, unto the East-Country.

And

evident that *Ismael*, and the other Sons of *Abraham* by *Ketura*, fill'd the different Parts of *Arabia*, from the Borders of *Egypt*, eastward. Nor ought the Coming of *Joseph* into *Egypt*, and the Descent of his Father and Family thither, to be over-look'd; nor is it to be doubted but they left the Odour and Tincture of their Religion behind them. Again: The astonishing Wonders that God wrought in *Egypt*, by the Plagues upon *Pharaoh*, by dividing the *Red Sea*, and by destroying the Kings in the Wilderness; by separating the Waters of *Jordan*, and rooting out the *Canaanites* from the Land: These Things, I say, could not but help to make very lasting Impressions on the *Eastern Nations*, far and wide. Add to this, that they were much given in those Countries to proverbial Sayings; to Poems and Songs, to Inscriptions upon Pillars and Monuments: All which tended to transmit Sentiments and Notions, and to perpetuate them from Fathers to Sons. And I look upon this to be the true Origin and Source of the *Wisdom* of the *East*; and which some Philosophical Tutors took delight to propagate and communicate to their Pupils and Scholars, in succeeding Ages. All these Things duly considered, who will wonder that some inquisitive Minds, among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, should pick up at least some good Sentiments about the true God, and Nature, and Providence!

But 'tis very surprizing, that the rational Gentlemen of our Day should so greedily swallow down these mouldy Scraps and Fragments, when they might be much better supply'd with Things fresh, and at first Hand, from the *Holy Bible*.

And they dwell from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria. Gen. xxv. ver. 6, 18.

Who

Who would be fond of these muddy and adulterated Streams, when they might easily go and drink freely at the Fountain-Head? Are these Principles any better, because they have pass'd through dirty and idolatrous Heathen Hands, than they are as deliver'd at first by the Prophets and Apostles, who *spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*? 'Tis therefore uncontestible, I think, on what Side the greater Weakness, and indeed Folly, appears; on the Side of these Masters of Reason, or the despised Sticklers to *Revelation*.

But to come nearer, if possible, to the Matter in Debate. If we view *natural Light* in its true Situation, devoid of all Improvements and Advantages from *Revelation*, and destitute of all the Polishing and Culture of Education; then the *Hottentots*, the Natives of the *Cape of Good Hope*, and also some *Negroes*, which are frequently imported into this Nation from other Parts of *Africa*, will give us a true Picture of it. In them we may plainly see what a wretched and abject State Mankind is capable of sinking into, without the Assistance of Heaven, either by Scripture or Tradition, or some other Means: A little Conversation with these miserable Creatures, stupid Animals in human Shape, might serve, I should think, if not to cure, yet to cool and check the strange Conceit that learned Men have entertained of late, of the mighty Power of *Natural Reason*, when absolutely left to act within its own Sphere.

But to make all the just Allowances that can fairly be demanded; the Sum of what we may expect from *Natural Light*, is to lead us to the Existence of God, and the Knowledge of some
of

of his Perfections. ^c For the invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things which are made; even his eternal Power and Godhead.

'Tis true, the Apostle says that they who had not the Law of Moses were a Law unto themselves, and did many Things contained in the Law, and thereby shew'd the Work of the Law written in their Hearts; their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another: But then, all that can be fairly inferred from hence, is, that Natural Light will acquaint us that there must be a *supreme Being*; and that he is almighty, wise, just, unchangeable, &c. 'Twill also suggest to us that we ought to fear him, and to avoid displeasing him. And our Consciences will excuse us, when we perform the Offices of Justice, Benevolence and Humanity towards others; and also accuse us, when we are guilty of gross Pollutions and immoral Actions, as Murder, Theft, Adultery, &c. I don't think that the Light of Nature will carry us much farther: For as to the Immortality of the Soul, and its Existence in a separate State, if Reason were left solely to it self, and had never in the least been aided or enlighten'd by some Rays and Glimmerings from *Revelation*, I believe our rational Gentlemen, notwithstanding all their *Philosophical Essays*, would leave us in the greatest Darkness and Confusion. And as to the Resurrection of the Body, the Light of Nature will never lead any Person to the Prospect and Belief of it. How then can we

^c Rom. i. 20.

reasonably hope to be guided by it, into the Way to enjoy God for ever? There is no coming to God but through the *Mediator*: There is no Mediator, but the *Son*; nor can any one possibly know *that the Son is that Person*, but by express Revelation. Upon the whole, I conclude that there is no other Rule besides the Word of God, sufficient to direct us in the Way to enjoy him for ever, but what must prove defective and dangerous; and, consequently, not fit to be put into any *Christian Catechism*.

As to that good-natur'd Notion, which divers ingenuous Men of the last and present Age have entertained, about the Salvation of some of the most sober and conscientious of the Heathen World, it does not reach the Case in hand: 'Tis only *gratis dictum*; 'tis wholly uncertain, and can be only look'd upon as a charitable Supposition at best; but it will not prove that the *Light of Nature* is a sufficient Rule, how we may enjoy God for ever.

Of the HOLY TRINITY.

3. I can't at present discern the true Reason why the worthy Author alter'd the State of the Question about the *Trinity*; but the Design of altering the Answer to it, is very obvious: It was, that he might avoid calling the blessed *Father, Son and Spirit, three Persons*. But since we must make use of the Titles, *first, second, and third*, when we are speaking about the *sacred Three*; and that they go under the Terms, *I, Thou, He*; by which Terms *Persons* are express'd, not only in the *Bible*, but in common Speech; I think the learned Author should, in Justice or in Kindness to us, have found out

some other Appellations, besides *Father, Son* and *Spirit*, to assist our Ideas in distinguishing one from another, in the Order of Discourse. The least we can demand, is to supply us with better Titles, before he deprives us of these. Farther, he does not give a fair Answer to his own Question; for he asks, *Do not the Scriptures give us an Account of more divine Persons than One?* To this he neither directly affirms, nor denies; but slips in this Answer: *The Scriptures give an Account of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that this ever blessed Trinity were entirely united, in compleating the most glorious of all God's Works.*

The Close of this Answer is not only obscure and ambiguous, but abrupt and imperfect; and seems to imply somewhat very injurious to the Characters of the *Son*, and *Spirit*. Were not the *sacred Three* entirely united in *beginning*, as well as in *compleating* the most glorious of all God's Works? Again; were they not entirely united in *beginning* and *compleating* the *less* glorious of all God's Works? I am sure the Scriptures affirm, that the *Son*^d *was before all Things*; and that *e* *all Things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* And the Spirit of God is called the *f* *Eternal Spirit*. And I can't imagine why the Reverend Reviser should exclude their being at the Beginning of all God's Works; unless it be, that he does not believe these Things: Neither can I forbear observing that 'tis a very uncouth, as well as an ensnaring Way of representing the Doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*, to tender and unskilful Minds, for whom the *Shorter Catechism* was always designed.

^d Col. i. 17.

^e John i. 2, 3.

^f Heb. ix. 14.

Of the DECREES OF GOD.

4. As to the Article about the *Decrees* of God, the learned Author has entirely omitted it; as having a Tendency, in his Opinion, to “weaken
“ the Obligations to Practical Religion; to
“ bring great Difficulties upon several conscientious Men, and to be offensive to many of
“ the most intelligent Hearers.” These seem to be the chief Motives which induced our Author wholly to expunge the Article of the *Decrees*. It may therefore be very proper to enquire what the *Assembly* have said of this Affair? The Words of their *Catechism* are these: *The Decrees of God are his eternal Purpose, according to the Counsel of his Will; whereby, for his own Glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.* These are the Expressions which give occasion for so great Distaste and Offence! But the Business in Debate may be brought to this narrow Compass; whether the whole Substance, and all the Parts, and fair Intention of this Paragraph, be not fully and evidently contained in the Holy Scriptures? If they are, there needs no other Apology for this Article; and the worthy *Reviser* might well have spar’d the striking it out of the *Assembly’s Catechism*. If he does not think fit to approve of the Term *Decrees*, yet there can be no Pretence for rejecting the Term *Counsel*; since ’tis found in variety of Places, of both the Old and New Testament; and, I think, strongly and evidently in the *very Sense* in which the *Assembly* took it. The Words of their *Catechism* make the Counsel of God prior to his Decrees, or volitive Purpose; and, according to our best *Ideas*, it must have been

thus : Counsel was *prior*, or previous to Purpose ; or there was first Counsel or Deliberation, and then Decree or Determination : And though *second Causes* did not then exist, yet God conceived them all in his infinite Mind, and comprehended all possible Events in his own boundless Prospect. In this fair Sense, and in no other, I apprehend it was that the *Assembly* asserted the *Decrees* of God to be his eternal Purpose, according to the Counsel of his Will. And therefore,

(1.) I don't think that this Gentleman will undertake to maintain that the blessed, and infinitely wise God, acted without Counsel (though it was held entirely within himself) in laying the Scheme of the Affairs of Creation and Providence. If he should engage on the negative Side of this Argument, the Scripture will stare him full in the Face, by urging the *Affirmative*, and assuring him, that God ^e *worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will* : That he is ^h *wonderful in Counsel*, and excellent in Working ; saying, ⁱ *My Counsel shall stand*, and I will do all my Pleasure. Besides, Reason suggests to us that the wisest of Beings would not act the rash, blind and inconsiderate Part, but in Pursuance of the most solemn Counsel.

(2.) Nor can I suppose that this Gentleman will venture to defend that any one Thing whatsoever comes to pass, by the Agency and Intervention of *second Causes*, even free Agents, or by their *willing*, *neglecting*, and *refusing* to act, without God's eternal and secret Counsel and Permission that it should be so. If he should undertake to affirm that there have been, or

^e Eph. i. 11.

^h Isa. xxviii. 29.

ⁱ Ch. xlii. 10.

are such Events, as may be said to be without the permissive Counsel of God; then I may justly demand the Instances: I mean, What Transactions are there, or were, in Heaven, in Earth, or in Hell, which the eternal and secret Counsel of God did not foresee, and permit to come to pass? The very Supposition is absurd, and unworthy of God, and of the *Idea* which *Reason* and *Revelation* convey to us, of a supreme and perfect Being. For, it will make him liable to Surprizals, to Incidents and Contingencies, and some other Marks of Imperfection; particularly, the Want of fore-seeing some Events, in order either to prevent, or permit them. Reason seems to recoil, at the allowing of this Blemish in the Deity; and the Holy Scripture is still more abhorrent from it.

(3.) It will be urg'd, that *Fore-seeing* is not *Fore-ordaining*; and that the *Assembly's Catechism* hath this Phrase (*fore-ordained*) and that there is a vast Difference between the one and the other. I acknowledge, in *finite Beings* there is a wide Difference between these two Things; and they are easily accounted for in our Natures: For, we may foresee that many Things will come to pass, wherein we are no ways concerned, either as to Cause or Effect; and we are Spectators of some Events, which, with the utmost Exertion of the Energy of the Will, and Execution of Power vested in us, we could not prevent. 'Tis not so with the Divine Nature. For, when the blessed God was about to form the Universe, he foresaw not only what sort of Creatures they would be; but also what they would do, and what their eventual Conduct would be. Such was the divine perfect Foresight and Intuition, that no Circumstance, no Incidence, no Consequence,

quence, could escape its Notice! Add to this, that he had Power to create, or not to create; nay, to create this, or that Sort of Beings. If this be not the State of the Case, I know not how to put a rational Interpretation on those Words; ^k *Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* ^l *Tbou hast created all Things; and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.*

Now, taking the divine, speculative Comprehension, in this View, we find the Almighty God created the upper intellectual World; I mean, the Angels. He thought proper to make them intelligent, or rational Beings; but, at the same time, they were made perfectly holy and upright: Freedom of Acting seem'd to be essential to their *Make*, and interwoven in their very Natures. The making of them *intelligent Beings* rendred them *active*; and their Activity was proportionate to the Excellence of their Natures, being of the immaterial Kind; or at least abstracted from that Grossness, that attends our compounded *human Frame*. The Angelic Class, thus exalted, all of them were put into a State mutable in itself; or, if you please, 'twas a good State, which their native Faculties were suited to, and they might have continued in it: But if they abused or mis-applied those Faculties, they might, by such a wilful Procedure, change that good State into a very bad one for themselves. Some Numbers of the Angelic Rank did actually run this Risque, and plung'd themselves at once out of Happiness into Misery. How this was effected, or what wanton and vicious Principle first entred into

^k Rom. ix. 20.

^l Rev. iv. 11.

their Minds, perhaps will not be known, till the Springs of all Actions will be laid open in the other World.

However, if the glorious Creator foresaw the several Steps of the progressive Conduct of those Angels which fell (as I verily believe he did) I can't discern any thing imputable to, or chargeable upon him, as unworthy of the *Supreme Being*: And then it must necessarily follow, that there must have been a *permissive Fore-Ordination*, or a *pre-ordinative Permission* of the eventual and actual Apostasy of some Angels.

(4.) The Individuals of the Angelic Order, who sided with the grand Rebel, and join'd with him in the Defection, never had any Proposal of Recovery, that we know of; neither the prime Revolter himself, nor any of his inferior Confederates, had any Offer of Reconciliation. Whatever the Transgression was, and the Provocation given by it, we don't find that the great Creator ever design'd to pass it by, or to forgive it: But, on the contrary, he has determin'd to reserve them all to be adjudg'd to eternal Punishment. And till this Instance fell out, there could not have been a clear and distinct Notion of *divine Justice*; there was no Opportunity of displaying it: For, I think, our best *Idea* of that Attribute, is to conceive that it will reward *righteous Agents*, and punish *wicked Ones*. Here the Glory of it shines, with very great Lustre. For,

(5.) We read of elect Angels. Whether we understand the Business of *Election*, in this Case, according to the fashionable Scheme of our Day, *i. e.* electing of them upon *foreseen Steadfastness*; electing of them, and confirming them in their
happy

happy State, as a *righteous Reward* of their *steady Obedience*, after having past a *Trial*: Or whether *Election* be consider'd here as the previous and *eternal Result* of the divine *Mind* and *Will*, that *These* should not join in the evil Combination, nor be taken in the Snare; though I firmly believe the latter Sense, for Reasons which I shall offer hereafter; yet 'tis not very material to my Purpose, which of the two Interpretations we take. For it will not affect my present Argument, if the former Sense were granted; even that the good Angels were elected upon *foreseen Allegiance*: For this would manifestly imply, that God had not only *foreseen*, but *fore-ordained* that they should *never fall*. If his Fore-knowledge discern'd that they would bear the *first Shock*, it was apparently *his Will* that no future Attempts should ever affect them. He *elected* them, and plac'd them in an unchangeable State, to be everlasting Attendants in his glorious Presence. And in this Sense the divine Goodness and Justice would be conspicuously advanced, in establishing such Creatures in an invariable Situation of Happiness, who had shewn so strong and invincible an Attachment to their blessed Creator.

(6.) But we must remember, that if Things had rested here, the Attribute of Mercy had been altogether conceal'd. This Branch of the divine Glory had never been known in the intellectual World, the only Part of the Creation capable of perceiving and admiring it; the fallen Angels being look'd upon as absolutely left in their guilty and unpardon'd Condition, and so irrecoverably miserable. But when the *Parents* of *Mankind* were drawn into the Transgression, then the Wisdom of the *supreme Being* would

would find a Ransom. Here a Door was open'd for Mercy to shew its beautiful Face, in the Recovery of Millions, which otherwise might have remain'd a wretched Prey, in the Hands of the first Deceiver.

(7.) It may now be proper to enquire, whether the blessed God *fore-saw*, and *fore-ordained* to permit, the Fall of the Parents of Mankind? What has been said already, will leave us very little room to doubt of the Truth of this. If he permitted the previous Steps leading to it, as the Revolt of Angels above-mentioned; so important an Event, as the Seduction of Man, could not but come within the Compass of the divine Counsel. That this Transaction was *fore-seen*, is, I think, out of the Question: And if the infinitely wise Creator had not thought fit to permit it, he would have prevented it, one way or other. But there are Two Things, which will put this Affair in a full Light.

First, That the Death of Christ was design'd and determin'd before any thing was created. He is said to be ^m slain, and ⁿ fore-ordained to it, before the Foundation of the World. And we are expressly assured, that he was delivered to Death, ^o by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God. And the whole Drift of the Gospel is, to declare that the Design of his Death was to redeem his People. What Colour of Reason could there be, for the Son of God to be destin'd to be dispos'd of after this Manner, if the sinful Apostasy of Man had not been *foreseen*, and even settled in the divine Counsel, to be permitted?

^m Rev. 13. 8.

ⁿ 1 Pet. i. 20.

^o Acts ii. 23.

Secondly, We read of some Number of Persons, whom God hath ^p *chosen in Christ, before the Foundation of the World*: These must be consider'd as some of the sinful Posterity of *Adam*. I shall not, at this Time, discuss the Nature of this *Choice*; as, whether it was upon *foreseen* Faith and Obedience, or whether it was the *absolute Result* of the *divine Will*? 'Tis sufficient to my Purpose, that there is frequent Mention made of a ^q *Design, before the Foundation of the World*, to save any Persons through *Jesus Christ*. How could this be said, if it had not been *foreseen*, and well known, that they should need such a Saviour? From these Considerations, 'tis not more certain to me that the Sun is up, on our *Horizon*, at Noon-day, than that the Permission of the Fall of Mankind was according to the *eternal Counsel of God*.

(8.) Having now taken a brief Survey of these mysterious Transactions, the original Defection of some Angels, and the Transgression of our first Parents; it will be readily agreed, that all *morally evil* Occurrences, that have interven'd ever since, *are owing to one or both of these Sources; *i. e.* all the sinful Events, that have come to pass in the World, in any Age or Place, have been brought about by the Influences, Temptations and Operations, of either fallen Angels, or wicked Men. This is undeniably evident: For, the blessed ^r *God cannot be tempted with Evil; neither tempteth he any Man*. And as to the unintelligent and inanimate Parts of the Creation, they are not capable of what is called *moral Evil*; therefore such Actions are

^p Eph. i. 4.

^q Id. Ibid.

^r James i. 13.

imputable only to *Angels* and *Men*. Here I have a Right to repeat my Demand; what single Instance can be pitch'd upon, as transacted by these *Agents*, which the divine *Counsel* had not fore-ordained to permit?

(9.) As to the Occurrences that are met with, in the Civil Government of the World; such as a Man's being struck dead with Lightning, or by a Tile, a Brick, or Piece of Timber falling upon his Head; these Things are look'd upon by us as Accidents, and Contingencies; but they are not, cannot be so, in the Estimate of infinite Knowledge. The Case is the same, as to the Events of War. † The Head of one King was covered in the Day of Battle, † when a *Bow drawn at a Venture* should give his mortal Wound to another, and yet said to be expressly *to fulfil the Word of the Lord*. † *Saul* fell upon his Sword, but the Lord takes it upon himself, that he slew him. * The Scripture does not scruple to affirm, that *such as are* (appointed) *to the Sword, are deliver'd to the Sword*. Again: If one Man should be kill'd by the Cast of a Stone, or any Weapon thrown unawares out of the Hand of another, such as the Head of an Ax slipping from the Helve in hewing of Wood, or cutting down a Tree; in this Case it is said, † *God delivered him into his Hand*. But it would be endless to recount these Instances. Certain it is, that Things very minute, and almost trifling in our View, are all of them under the divine Notice and Direction. *A Sparrow shall not fall on the Ground, without our Father: The very Hairs*

† Psal. cxl. 7. † 1 Kings xxii. 34, 38. † 1 Chron.
x. 14. * Jer. xv. 2, 3. † Exod. xxi. 13.

of our Head are all number'd. And God hath determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of all our Habitations.

That the supreme Being over-rules the whole System of Events, both good and evil, from the greatest to the least, for his own Glory, cannot be disputed; since some of the divine Attributes, as has been shewn already, could not otherwise have appeared. Now, if the honest and unbiass'd Reader will please to put these Particulars together, I am much mistaken, if they will not serve as so many Links to make up a Chain of *rational* and *scriptural* Truths; even such, as will sufficiently support the Proposition in the *Assembly's Catechism* (struck out by the learned Reviser, for being offensive) *viz.*
 " The Decrees of God are his eternal Purpose,
 " according to the Counsel of his Will; where-
 " by, for his own Glory, he hath fore-ordained
 " whatsoever comes to pass."

Of the Doctrine of ELECTION.

The next Thing I observe, is, that the learned Author has left out the Phrase *Elected*, in the Answer to the 20th, and exchange'd the Word *Elect* for *Mankind*, in the Answer to the 21st Question in the *Assembly's Catechism*; with a Design to frame his own Answer thus, to his 19th Question: *God having, out of his mere good Pleasure, purposed from Eternity to shew special Favour to Mankind, did enter into a Covenant of Grace, to deliver them out of a State of Sin and Misery, and to bring them into a State of Salvation by a Redeemer.* But I very much doubt the
 Truth

Truth of all this; *i. e.* the Contents of this Answer. For this Gentleman must mean, if this Paragraph be any thing to his Purpose, that God had Mankind as an indifferent *Lump*, or *collective Body*, in his *View* from Eternity, without respecting *one* more than *another*, when this *Covenant* was entred into; and that he did engage to deliver every *Individual* alike, the *one* as well as the *other*, out of a State of *Sin* and *Misery*, and to bring them into a State of *Salvation* by a *Redeemer*. Supposing this to be his Meaning (and I can't see what other fair Construction his Words will admit of) I am well satisfied the Truth of this cannot be maintained; and it will appear that changing the Word *Elect*, in this Place, for *Mankind*, is a Change for the worse. For,

1. *Millions* of the *Posterity* of *Mankind* never heard of this *Covenant*; nor of the *Redeemer*, in, and through whom, it was made. The *Nature*, *Terms*, and *Proposals* of it, were never laid before them; and so they could neither be said to *receive*, nor *reject* the Benefits of it, being utter Strangers to it. How then can it be affirmed, consistent with Truth, “ that God entred into “ a *Covenant* of Grace, to deliver *Mankind* out “ of a State of Sin and Misery, and to bring “ them into a State of Salvation by a Redeemer?”

2. If it be alledged, that the Paragraph refers directly to *those* who might have the Advantage of the Scriptures; it may be justly answered, *Then* it should have been fairly expressed, *some part* of *Mankind*, and not *all Mankind*, indefinitely: And this would have made
some

some Amends for erasing, or exchanging the Word *Elect*.

3. I can't think that the learned Author himself will attempt to maintain that *all*, to whom the Gospel is sent, are delivered from a State of *Sin and Misery*, and brought into a State of *Salvation*. For, among the ^a *Jews* themselves, who had the Advantage of the *Oracles of God*; to whom pertained the *Adoption*, and the *Glory*, and the *Covenants*, and the *Giving of the Law*, and the *Service of God*, and the *Promises*: Yet, I say, among these, they were not *all Israel*, which were *born of Israel*. And our ^a Lord assur'd us, that *many be called, but few chosen*. And among the ^b *Gentiles*, the *Apostles* were unto God a *sweet Saviour of Christ*, in them that were *saved*, and in them that *perished*; and declared, that if the Gospel was *bid*, it was *hid* to them that were *lost*: In whom the God of this World hath blinded the Eyes of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine into them. But not to enter at present upon the secret (whether direct or indirect) Causes of these Events; yet since we find they are undoubted Facts, the Paragraph of the worthy *Reviser* is hereby entirely overthrown: For 'tis evident that some are eventually and finally left in a State of *Sin, Misery, and Perdition*, even where the Gospel is preached.

So that if it be insisted on ever so much, that God, by Vertue of the Covenant of Grace, where the Promulgation of it reaches, gives sufficient Aid and Strength to deliver all out of

^a Rom. ix. 6.
& Chap. iii. 3, 4.

^a Matt. xx. 16.

^b 2 Cor. ii. 15.

a State of Sin and Misery, and to bring them to a State of Salvation, 'tis a groundless Assertion; the Allegation being apparently not true, in fact. For some would not believe one Syllable of the *Apostles Doctrine*, but called them *Fools* and *Bablers*: These never had sufficient Strength to subdue their native Infidelity, nor to move one Step out of it. And indeed the very Notion, that some People are so fond of, that sufficient Grace was once given to them that perish, is inconsistent, and contradictory in itself. If it had been sufficient, 'twould effectually have answer'd the End: 'Twas not sufficient; therefore it failed.

4. On the other hand, we read of God's ^c quickning of some, who were *dead in Trespasses and Sins*; ^d the Eyes of their *Understanding* being *enlightned*;—^e which were *born*, not of *Blood*, nor of the *Will* of the *Flesh*, nor of the *Will* of *Man*, but of *God*: Even ^f *Babes*; to whom the *Mysteries of the Gospel* were *revealed*, when hid at the same Time *from many wise and prudent*; and that for no other Reason, than that it was the mere Pleasure of *God the Father* so to do. And the Lord expressly told *Paul*, that he had *much People* (in an unconverted State) in an *idolatrous* ^g *Gentile City*; and encourag'd him to preach boldly, in order to their Conversion, according to his declar'd Intention towards them.—And, ^h as many as were *ordained to eternal Life*, *believed*:—ⁱ The *Election* hath *obtained it*; the *rest* were *blinded*. I only ask, whether it seems probable, from these Considerations, that God

^c Eph. ii. 1.

^f Luke x. 21.

ⁱ Rom. xi. 7.

^d Chap. i. 18.

^g Acts xviii. 10.

^e Jo'n i. 13.

^h Cl. xiii. 48.

did ever enter into a Covenant of Grace, to deliver Mankind, equally alike, out of a State of Perdition, and to bring them into a State of Salvation?

5. The Terms, *Elect* and *Election*, are not of human Stamp, nor consecrated merely by long Use; but they are *scriptural* Phrases, Words of *Truth* and *Soberness*; and they make up, in conjunction with the Doctrines directly referring to them, a very considerable Part of the Writings of the New Testament. And I am far from thinking that the Gentlemen of the *New Scheme* have hitherto found out any satisfactory, rational Meaning, to affix to them. For,

(1.) When they apply these Terms to the Election of *Nations* or *Churches*, in the Beginning of *Christianity*, in allusion to the *Jewish Church* and People; 'tis so loose and incoherent an Account, that I have often wondred that any Gentleman, who has a good Talent of Reasoning about Scripture-Knowledge, should ever content himself with it.

(2.) Personal, conditional Election, is so mean and precarious, that it does not deserve the Name: For the Party concern'd, amidst the various Temptations he is encompass'd with, is so liable to be *in* and *out* of the divine Favour, that there is no Principle of *Certainty* to rest upon. God's Engagement is suppos'd to be only conditional; and the Free Will of the Person may turn to Evil a little before he dies, and continue so; for he may die suddenly, and then his Election is void, and of no Use.

(3.) If, in the lapsed State of Mankind, there be granted a Will equally free to *moral Good* or *Evil*; then, I think, that Election upon *Fore-sight*,

sight, that a Person will chuse and persevere in that which is good, is the most rational *Hypothesis*: And that the blessed God, from the Infinity and Perfection of his Nature and Mind, did infallibly foresee from Eternity who shall be saved, and who will perish, seems to be so reasonable in itself, that it must be allowed on all Hands. And this will comport with the present Scheme in Vogue, viz. the *Fitness*, or *Unfitness* of Things: For 'tis fit that he who bends and employs his Will to that which is good, should be rewarded with *Happiness*; and that he who abuseth the Freedom of his Will, by bending it to that which is Evil, should be punished. But, upon this Supposition, it should be remembered, that *this* ought not to be called *Election*; only *Foresight*, or *Fore-knowledge* of the Party's *eventual Conduct*. Nor can I discern, upon this Principle, but that the contrary (the other Foresight) might be called an Election to *Death*; since Life and Death equally depend upon the good *Use*, or the *Abuse* of the Freedom of the Will. Therefore I must not omit one Thing more, under this Head; i. e. that the Gentlemen of this Scheme should not be altogether so severe, as they usually are, upon us who believe an eternal, absolute Election of Grace, in charging us with representing God as a cruel Being. If the blessed God fore-knows, for certain (as these Gentlemen I think will acknowledge) who shall be saved, and who will be lost; where is the mighty Difference, between the *Amount* of *their* Principle, and *ours*? Is the supreme Being cruel, because he has chosen a determinate Number, whom he will infallibly recover, and take peculiar Care of? Or

is he so, because he creates and produces, and continues the Production of *Millions*; whom his perfect Prescience could not but foresee, that they would eternally perish? I should think it difficult to account for this, by any Dint of Reason; or to justify the *moral Rectitude* of the divine *Oeconomy* in this Affair, without having Recourse to *Sovereignty*, or something very like it.

(4.) Therefore, in my humble Opinion, 'tis a great Mistake, that the *Rationalists* of our Age are run into, to suppose that we are oblig'd to give distinct and clear Reasons for all the Steps of the divine Procedure. 'Tis a Task that no Mortal ought to undertake; for he is unequal to it, it does not lie in his Power to perform it. Indeed, as to Things that fall within the Compass of human Reason, they may be examin'd and canvass'd with Freedom; but as to those Hints which we have, of Purposes conceived in the good Pleasure of the divine Mind, there we must be altogether guided and govern'd by *Revelation*: For, had they not been revealed, in some measure, we should have known nothing of them; and, consequently, all that we can say of them, must be founded on *Revelation*. For, *Who hath stood in the Counsel of the Lord?* ¹ *Who hath known his Mind?* ^m *For he giveth not account of any of his Matters.* He is of one Mind, and who can turn him? And what his Soul desireth, even that he doth. He performeth the Thing that is appointed; ⁿ *and many such Things are with him.*

^k Jer. xxiii. 18.

¹ Rom xi. 34.

^m Job xxxiii. 13.

ⁿ Chap. xxiii. 13.

(5.) Of this Sort I apprehend the Doctrine of personal, absolute Election, to be: Such, as the natural *Intelligence* of Man could never have taken any Cognizance of: Such as the utmost human Penetration could never have reach'd; being one of the eternal Secrets entertained in the divine Counsel: And which the wisest and best of Men can no farther look into, than the revealed Will of God has laid it open. For it will appear in no other Light, than in *that* of the *Holy Scriptures*. These *Oracles* of the divine Mind, and *these* alone, make mention of it: And, upon this Account, 'tis equally fruitless for the *Thought* of Man to attempt the assigning of Reasons for it, as 'tis to dispute against it. For, since there are clear and express Passages, such as I call plain and simple Propositions, in the New Testament, which affirm and maintain that there is such a *Thing* as the *Election of Grace*; *i. e.* an Election of some *Individuals* of Mankind, to *spiritual Privileges* here, and to *eternal Life* hereafter, 'tis my proper Business to rest satisfied in this Authority. Nor does it become me to be too officious, by enquiring, with an unscriptural Freedom, into the *Causes, Motives, and Reasons* of such a Procedure. And it seems as if the *Almighty* intended to *bide Pride from Man*, in this Case; and to preclude all boasted Reasonings, about this awful Transaction: For when the Scriptures mention it, the blessed God is introduced as the most free and independent Agent; *according as he hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the Foundation of the World—having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children—according to the good Pleasure of his Will. Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* It is

God that justifieth. — Therefore hath he Mercy, on whom he will have Mercy. — The Election hath obtained it. — Who art thou, that repliest against God?

(6.) The Apostle, under the Direction of the Holy Ghost, having applied the Word *Elect* to the good Angels, gives me ground to believe that it was the same *absolute Result* of the divine Will, that fixed those glorious *Individuals* in their happy State, and made it *impossible* for them to fall; as that determin'd to recover some Numbers of the *Apostate Race* of Mankind, and made it, strictly speaking (considering what had past in the Counsel of Heaven) *impossible* for them eternally to perish. And thus the infinitely wise God would inviolably secure to himself a considerable Part of the *intellectual World*, though consisting of two distinct *Species* of Beings: And it seems, out of two *broken States*, he will erect one glorious Kingdom, which will have no End. And it appears, that, in the mean Time, the more excellent Creatures are made subservient to the less noble; till they arrive together to be *Fellow-Citizens*, and so to make up the entire and compleat Household of God. ° Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation?

(7.) I should think it a very odd Employment; for a Person of good Understanding, who had read the *New Testament* with due Attention, to go about endeavouring to prove that *Judas the Traitor* ever was upon the same equal Foot, and solid Ground of Salvation, with the other Eleven Disciples, or the Seventy, whose Names

° Heb. i, ult.

our Lord says were written in Heaven: And I am very sensible, that as it is not the Business, so it is not in the Power of any *Mortal*, to assign Reasons for the divine Conduct in this Instance; and it is with the utmost Fear and Reverence, towards the blessed *Majesty* of Heaven, that I mention it.

There were divers very awful Prophecies existing concerning this *Judas*, in the Book of *Psalms*, and elsewhere in the Old Testament, which, I think, are irreconcilable to his being appointed to eternal Salvation. Our Lord knew from the Beginning, before he took him into the Number of his Disciples; that he should betray him; and that he was a Devil, and the Son of Perdition; and said that he was lost, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: And, after the Death of this Person, the Apostle *Peter* repeated the same Thing; That the Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the Mouth of David, spake before, concerning *Judas*—who by Transgression fell, that he might go to his own Place. These Characters and Descriptions of him are directly opposite to what is affirm'd of the other Disciples, i. e. that their Names were written in Heaven. This was their distinguishing Privilege; but a Privilege expressly declared to be entirely owing to the free Result of the divine Will: Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy Sight.

It will be but to little Purpose, to object here, that *Judas* forfeited his Right to Heaven by his base Covetousness and Treachery: For, considering what was foretold of him, long before his Birth, as well as said of him afterwards; it can neither be inferred from Scripture, nor Reason, that

that he ever had a Claim to Heaven, by *having his Name written there*, in the Sense in which 'tis clearly asserted the other Disciples had. And, consequently, I urge, not without good Evidence, that the blessed God, *who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will*, has in his secret, previous Purposes, made a wide Difference in the eternal Allotments of the Children of Men.

Again : We read of some, *who were before of old ordained* (register'd, or written down) *to Condemnation* ; but we read of others, *who were ordained to eternal Life*. The plain Question that I chuse to put, is this : Whether it was an indifferent Thing, in the Estimate of the Almighty, that these *two Parties should exchange States* ? i. e. that they who were ordained to *eternal Life*, should fall into *Condemnation*, and so *vice versa* ? If the Reverend Reviser can evidently make it out, that there was no eternal, unalterable Counsel, interposed in this Case ; but that they might interchange their *future States*, without infringing upon the Purposes of God, and making him mutable in his Designs : I say, if the worthy Author can prove, that our Lord Christ had no more Concern for those who were *given him* of the Father, than for those who were *not given him* ;—and that they for whom he *fervently prayed*, were no nearer and dearer to him than the *rest of the World*, for which he openly declar'd *he did not pray* ;—and that they, of whom he protested *none should pluck them out of his, nor his Father's Hands*, might become the *Vessels of Wrath, fitted for Destruction* ; Then, I promise to be of his Opinion. Till this be done, I shall look upon his Scheme as repugnant to
Reve-

Revelation; and a crude Mass of Inconsistencies, unworthy to be called *rational*.

(8.) The strange and extravagant Humour of *Reasoning*, so called, which some People indulge at this Time, not only in Neglect, but in Contempt of *Revelation*, will, I doubt, prove fatal to the present and rising Generation. 'Tis this false Reasoning (the Wisdom of this World, but Foolishness with God) that militates against the sublime Truths of *Revealed Religion*, and brings an *Odium* upon them, even from the very Populace. Not but solid Reasoning, especially under the Direction of the *sacred Oracles*, has its proper *Sphere* and Office to act in; *viz.* to discern between *Truth* and *Error*, *Good* and *Evil*, &c. But then this Faculty should not be injuriously and stubbornly levelled against plain *Positions* in *Revelation*. Here lies the Bane, and pernicious Abuse of *Natural Reasoning*, abstracted from divine Influence, in that 'tis above receiving any *Documents* from *Revelation*. It will not be convinced of its own Impotence, and is averse to accept of any better Guidance. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* But 'tis certain, that the direct Design of *Revelation* was to impart to the human Mind some beautiful Discoveries, which it could never have attained of it self. 'Twas calculated to heighten, to ennoble and enrich the Mind with the Intimations of some Truths, which otherwise would have been altogether hid from us; at least, whilst in this World. Now, through inward Pride, and other Prepossessions, the Bias of Education not excepted, these divine
Inti-

Intimations prove disrelishing to the natural Mind: The Taste is vitiated; *Reason* spurns at them, and will not truckle to them; but, on the other hand, expects that the profoundest Homage should be paid to her *own dear Self*. Hence she forcibly breaks way, to follow *Rules* and *Maxims* of her own prescribing; and those, very often, and in many Points, contradictory to the express Declarations of the *Holy Scriptures*. And this, in my humble Opinion, is one Way of accounting for the great Defection of our Day, and the *surprizing Variation* there is in the Principles of *Protestant Dissenters*, from what they were forty Years ago: 'Tis owing to their listening too much to the *natural Dictates* of their own *darken'd Minds*, and laying aside, in a great Measure, the Use of their *Bibles*.

'Tis not to be denied, that the Gentlemen of the *Establishment* have led the Way, and are long since gone from the primitive Purity and Strictness of their *Articles*: And now the *Dissenters* are so complaisant as to follow them, as fast as they can. And it must be acknowledged, that the worthy *Reviser* judged very rightly; viz. that though he would not attempt, at once, to wrest the *Assembly's Catechism* out of the Hands of *that Remnant*, which is willing to retain it; yet if he could remove some *obnoxious Paragraphs*, that mostly stand in the way of the present *prevailing Scheme*, it would make a quick Work, with the Business of the Revolution of Principles, in *our Communities*. Our People, in a little Time, would not bear to hear so much as the bare mentioning of the *eternal Purposes* and *Counsels* of God, in regard to the Government of the *moral* or *natural* World: Especially, the Terms, *Elect*
and

and *Blessed*, *fore-ordained* and *predestinated*, must not once come into our Mouths, unless we agree to cancel the genuine and *scriptural* Meaning of them. For, when our Children, and others under our Care, are discus'd to these Scripture Phrases and Doctrines in their *Catechism*, they will receive them very awkwardly; or, rather, be affronted at them, when deliver'd from the *Pulpit*: For they'll have this *Plea*; "That these Phrases are fallen under the heavy Displeasure of the Age; are accounted as mean, empty, and insignificant;—are only despicably popular, and not *philosophical*;—are offensive to the most intelligent Hearers, and bring Difficulties upon our most polite and rational Preachers." Being reduc'd to this *Dilemma*, what must be done? We shall find our selves miserably pinion'd; or, rather, shamefully over-aw'd and silenc'd, even by them, who have been bred up under our own Tuition and Ministry. For this Contagion will not only spread it self in our Neighbourhoods, but reach our very Doors, and infect the nearest and dearest Members of our Families. And shall we sit still, and tamely submit to all this? Must we servilely resign some of the most solemn Phrases, and important Doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures, and exchange them for we know not what?—I should think it the infinitely wiser and safer Way, to lift up a Standard against this threatening and approaching Evil; and to stand in Defence of a *Catechism*, which is so well grounded upon Scripture, and has been so eminently useful hitherto, and I may say so signally blessed in Multitudes of Families of different Characters,

in these Nations, for near a Century last
past.

But let us a little enquire, what valuable
Consideration we are to have in Lieu, if we
should agree to give up these Points. It seems,
we are to receive a *Scheme*, projected, and cal-
culated to suit the Taste (the more is the Case
to be lamented) of the Majority of the Ministers
of our Day: A Scheme, that tends to lull us
asleep in the midst of the greatest Danger; by
hiding from us our deplorable State, by de-
nying, palliating, or excusing the wretched
Consequences of the sinful Apostasy of Man-
kind; and by telling us, that the Case is not
so bad with us, by Nature, as in reality it is;
but that *we are rich, and increased with Goods,*
and have need of nothing; when, in Truth, *we*
are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind,
and naked: A Scheme, fitted to extol the mi-
staken Excellencies of our impair'd Faculties,
and to depretiate the Glory of Revelation, and
to bring into Contempt the most spiritual and
divine Passages of the Gospel. And indeed,
upon this Account, when 'tis thoroughly exa-
min'd, 'twill appear not much better than
Heathen Mythology; even that *Philosophy*, and
vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the
Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ,
which the Apostle so earnestly warns against.
In a word, 'tis a Scheme that takes the Govern-
ment of the Universe out of the Hand of the di-
recting Counsel of God, and lodges it in the
Will and Power of some other Agents; or re-
solves it into the Bosom of blind Nature, which
must then be own'd as the Mother of all Vi-
cissitudes

accidents and Revolutions, fortuitous Hits, and casual Events, that come to pass in the World; We must expect to hear no more of the *Decrees, Counsels, and Purposes of Heaven*: These are exploded Terms, and fallen into Disgrace; as too mean, and not fit to be suffer'd in a Catechism, designed to train up our Children in.

Lately Published;

(By the same Author.)

THE NEW-BORN INFANT, OR, THE FIRST STEPS TO KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. IN ANSWER TO MR. JAMES WATSON'S BOOK, ENTITLED, A DEFENCE OF INFANT-BAPTISM, &c. To which are annex'd, Animadversions on the Reverend Dr. JOSEPH KIDGLEY'S Dissertation on INFANT-BAPTISM.

Printed for JAMES WATSON, at the King's Head in Pall-mall; and JOHN WATSON, at the White Hart in Cornhill; H. WATSON, the Royal Exchange; and SAMUEL KIDGLEY.



and the most glorious, glorious Hile, and
 casual Events, that come to pass in the World.
 We must expect to hear no more of the De-
 struction of Heaven: These
 are exploded Terms, and fallen into Disgrace;
 as too great, and not fit to be latter'd in a
 Catechism, designed to train up our Chil-
 dren in.

Lately Published,

(By the same AUTHOR)

INFANT-BAPTISM no Institution of
 CHRIST; and the Rejection of it justified
 from Scripture and Antiquity. In Answer to
 Mr. *Fowler Walker's* Book, entitled, *A Defence*
of INFANT-BAPTISM, &c. To which are
 annex'd, Animadversions on the Reverend Dr.
Thomas Ridgley's Dissertation on I N F A N T -
 B A P T I S M.

Printed for *Aaron Ward*, at the *King's Arms* in
Little Britain; *John Noon*, at the *White Hart* in
Cheapside; *H. Whitridge*, near the *Royal Exchange*;
 and *Samuel Rogers*, in *Abergavenny*.



